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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2016  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [KCRM](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TD](#)  
SUBJECT: MANNING: LIFTING IMET RESTRICTIONS VINDICATES T&T  
STAND ON ARTICLE 98

REF: POS 01040

Classified By: ADCM, John Ries for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (U) As reported septel, Prime Minister Patrick Manning,s October 4 budget speech, was, for the most part, devoted to a discussion of T&T,s largely energy-driven revenues and of proposed expenditures on infrastructure development, manufacturing diversification and agriculture promotion, as well as spending on improvements in national security, education, health care, housing and social services. However, Manning began his speech with a foreign policy item, giving parliament and his national television audience the previous day,s news about the lifting by the United States of Article 98-related sanctions on T&T and thereby allowing T&T to benefit from International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding.

12. (C) Manning boasted that, with the lifting of restrictions on IMET funding for T&T, his government,s long standing refusal to sign an Article 98 agreement with the US was thereby &vindicated8. He also seemed to take personal credit for this change in US policy, noting that the announcement of the policy change came close on the heels of his raising the issue with Members of Congress during his recent visit to Washington.

13. (U) Manning reviewed at some length the GOTT,s efforts to professionalize T&T,s law enforcement agencies and reduce the country,s high crime rate, particularly gang-related and other murders. As he did most recently during his September 5 address before energy industry executives and members of the diplomatic core (Ref POS 01040), he attributed the violence to the relentless trafficking in drugs and firearms originating in South America and transiting T&T en route to Europe and the United States. Manning listed numerous technologies (including, among others, radar, boats and helicopters) and foreign consultants which have bolstered his government,s efforts, giving special recognition to the hands-on investigative assistance provided to the police service by retired officers from the United Kingdom. On the other hand, although Manning referred specifically to the recent drastic decrease in kidnappings for ransom, he made no mention of the critical role played by the FBI which led to the arrest and prosecution of 3 T&T Defense Force members responsible for a wave of kidnappings for ransom.

14. (C) COMMENT: Prime Minister Manning,s omission of any reference to assistance provided by the US to T&T,s law enforcement authorities is not new. The FBI,s record of expertise and accomplishment, as well as other US-provided assistance, speak for themselves. Nevertheless, we may be thankful that this time, Manning refrained from publicly criticizing the US, as he did on September 5, for allegedly ignoring the Caribbean and focusing on the global war against

terror at the expense of the fight against drug and firearms  
trafficking. END COMMENT.  
AUSTIN